

Business

Toyota's 'woven' city, Samsung robot-ball in focus at tech show

Annual Consumer Electronics Show opens in Las Vegas

LAS VEGAS: A smart city from Toyota, a rolling robot from Samsung and a new 5G smartphone from China's TCL were among the announcements Monday at the Consumer Electronics Show preview day.

Here are a few highlights from the events at CES that opened yesterday in Las Vegas.

Toyota's 'Woven City'

The Japanese auto giant said it would create a "woven city" on 70 hectares (175 acres) at the base of Mount Fuji in Japan, powered by hydrogen fuel cells, to test autonomous driving and other technologies. "Building a complete city from the ground up, even on a small scale like this, is a unique opportunity to develop future technologies, including a digital operating system for the city's infrastructure," said company president Akio Toyoda.

He was joined by Danish architect Bjarke Ingels of the Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG), which will collaborate on the project. The city will be designed for around 2,000 people, including Toyota employees and visiting researchers, with sustainable construction materials, in-home robotics to assist with daily living and sensor-based AI to check occupants' health.

Ingels told the news conference the city would have different types of thoroughfare for autonomous vehicles, pedestrians and "micro mobility" vehicles such as scooters and bikes.

The smart homes "will take advantage of full productivity, using sense of the AI to do things automatically like restocking your fridge or taking out the trash, or even taking care of how healthy you are," Ingels said.

LG goes shopping

LG said its smart televisions were being enhanced to give viewers real-time answers to questions about what is happening on screens—from sports to news to films, and even help them find and buy what a particular

actor may be wearing. Technology created by startup TheTake aims to provide a comprehensive "shoppable video experience" through new partnerships with smart TV leader LG Electronics and media companies including WarnerMedia, A+E Networks, Crown Media Family Networks, and NBC Universal.

Beginning this year, owners of LG's new webOS Smart TVs will be able to shop on-screen for things they spy on participating networks' shows, according to TheTake. "Shoppable video has been talked about since the days of Rachel's sweater on 'Friends,'" said TheTake co-founder and chief executive Tyler Cooper.

5G under \$500

Chinese consumer electronics giant TCL offered a glimpse at three new smartphones, one tailored for super-fast 5G networks, and promised all would come in at less than \$500 at launch later this year.

TCL revealed it is working on a phone with a screen that folds like a book, and a visor headset that gives an experience like looking at a 110-inch television screen. Both of those were prototypes in development.

Samsung's rolling robot

Samsung scored points with its rolling robot ball, named Ballie, which tracks its owner around the home. The ankle-high robot was designed as a "life companion" and fits into the company's vision of "human centered" artificial intelligence.

Sebastian Seung, chief research scientist at Samsung Electronics, described the tiny robot as a fitness assistant and a mobile interface to help people in various situations. "It's a remote control that helps seniors control all the smart devices in the home, and calls for help if they need it," he told a CES keynote.

The South Korean consumer electronics giant also showed a "Sero" television that can pivot from portrait to landscape modes the way smartphones or tablets do



LAS VEGAS: Samsung Research Chief Scientist, Executive Vice President Sebastian Seung speaks during the Samsung press event for CES 2020 at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center yesterday in Las Vegas, Nevada. —AFP

in an appeal to generations raised with mobile internet viewing habits. The Sero, which means "vertical" in Korean, debuted in South Korea last year but will be available in other countries in 2020.

TV watching back

Chinese TV colossus Skyworth is taking its line-up to the US and Europe, with 8K resolution models that

boast artificial intelligence along with cameras that watch the watcher. "We believe adding cameras to TVs will become a new worldwide trend," Skyworth chief executive Tony Wang said while unveiling its latest line-up of displays. Artificial intelligence built into the cameras in TVs can handle video calls, take pictures, and even track body motion for fitness or game applications. —AFP

Argentina food prices soar after VAT is returned to basic basket

CARACAS: The measure that exempted the payment of 21 percent for basic foods expired on December 31. This week there are already increases above what was agreed by the government last week, with the change of the year, the measure that exempted the payment of 21 percent of the Value Added Tax (VAT) for food in the basic basket ceased to be in force in Argentina.

Since then some of these products have already registered increases of up to 16 percent, and even above what had been agreed with the government.

According to the prices that companies publish on their e-commerce platforms, it was found that most of the price variations were around 7 percent, in line with what the companies had agreed with the government. But in some cases those percentages were exceeded, reaching increases of 16 percent, as in the case of some oils. In the case of some flours and rice the increases are around 14.5 percent.

Due to the drag of the previous year and the impact of these increases on food prices in the basic basket, January inflation is hardly below December levels, which was estimated at 4.2 percent. This percentage would be maintained despite the measures taken by the government such as the freezing of transport tariffs and the postponement of fuel increases. In December, according to the consultant Elypsis, food and beverages increased 3.9 percent and 58 percent in the year.

The food and beverage item is the one with the greatest weight in the general inflation indicator (with approximately 30 percent) and January is usually a month of high seasonal inflation, so from the Econviews consultant they anticipate that January's monthly inflation will have a 3.5 percent floor, despite the freezing of several regulated prices. —Reuters

Hyundai to make flying cars for Uber air taxis

LAS VEGAS: Hyundai announced Monday it would mass produce flying cars for Uber's aerial rideshare network set to deploy in 2023. The South Korean manufacturer said it would produce the four-passenger electric "vertical take-off and landing vehicles" at "automotive scale," without offering details. The deal announced at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas could help Uber, which is working with other aircraft manufacturers, to achieve its goal of deploying air taxi service in a handful of cities by 2023.

Jaiwon Shin, head of Hyundai's urban air mobility division, said he expects the large-scale manufacturing to keep costs

affordable for the aerial systems.

"We know how to mass produce high quality vehicles," Shin told a news conference at CES. He said he expected the partnership to allow for the short-range air taxis to be "affordable for everyone." Eric Allison, head of Uber Elevate, appeared at the CES event with Hyundai to discuss the partnership.

"By taking transportation out of the two dimensional grid on the ground and moving it into the sky, we can offer significant time savings to our riders," Allison said. He said that because of its other app-based transport options, "only Uber can seamlessly connect riders from cars, trains and even bikes to aircraft." Uber has announced it had selected Melbourne to join Dallas and Los Angeles in becoming the first cities to offer Uber Air flights, with the goal of beginning demonstrator flights in 2020 and commercial operations in 2023.

Hyundai is using CES to show the S-A1 model aircraft with a cruising speed up to 180 miles (290 km) per hour. The aircraft utilizes "distributed electric



LAS VEGAS: A model of the S-A1 urban air taxi concept is displayed during a Hyundai press event for CES 2020 at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center on Monday in Las Vegas, Nevada. —AFP

propulsion," designed with multiple rotors that can keep it in the air if one of them fails. The smaller rotors also help reduce noise, which the companies said

is important to cities. The Hyundai vehicle will be piloted initially but over time will become autonomous, the company said. —AFP

Musk hands over made-in-China Teslas to early buyers in Shanghai

SHANGHAI: Tesla CEO Elon Musk presented the first batch of made-in-China cars to ordinary buyers yesterday in a milestone for the company's new Shanghai "giga-factory", but which comes as sales decelerate in the world's largest electric-vehicle market. The eccentric entrepreneur danced awkwardly, gave out high-fives, and mugged on a stage as sleek Model 3 sedans—the company's mid-price, mass-market offer-

were driven up one by one and presented to buyers who jumped into the back seats before being driven away at the plant.

The factory is the company's first outside the United States and a key step forward in Musk's strategy of going global. Musk said it was just the start of what will be a growing investment in China by the California-based electric-vehicle pioneer.

"We intend to continue making a significant investment and increasing that investment in China, making the Model 3 and the Model Y, and future models also in China," he said.

Musk, 48, said Tesla also planned to establish "a China design and engineering center to actually design an original car in China for worldwide consumption." Tesla has said the multi-billion-dollar plant is producing more than 1,000 vehicles per week. It has already delivered a small batch of Model 3s on December 30 to

employees who had pre-ordered them.

Those being driven away at yesterday's event were the first for regular consumers. The giga-factory is unusual for China, which typically requires foreign automakers to forge manufacturing joint ventures with domestic firms, which means sharing profits and technology with local partners.

Sales slowdown

But amid sustained US pressure on China to open its markets, that requirement was waived for the Shanghai assembly line, which is wholly-owned by Tesla and believed to be the first to enjoy that status. Musk has said that the plant would eventually have an annual production capacity of 500,000 vehicles, and has billed it as the solution to the company's perennial struggles with production delays and failure to keep up with demand. —AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.801
Indian Rupees	4.240
Pakistani Rupees	1.970
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.671
Nepali Rupees	2.643
Singapore Dollar	226.380
Hongkong Dollar	39.090
Bangladesh Taka	3.550
Philippine Peso	5.991
Thai Baht	10.139
Malaysian Ringgit	77.698

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.067
Qatari Riyal	83.496
UAE Dirham	789.604
Bahraini Dinar	807.230
UAE Dirham	82.768

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	22.000
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	18.959
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.220
Tunisian Dinar	114.640
Jordanian Dinar	428.760
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.203
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.182

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	303.800
Euro	342.230
Sterling Pound	401.780
Canadian dollar	235.320
Turkish lira	52.020
Swiss Franc	315.470
US Dollar Buying	296.450

Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	303.550
Canadian Dollar	234.610
Sterling Pound	398.670
Euro	340.480
Swiss Frank	297.440
Bahrain Dinar	807.250
UAE Dirhams	83.050
Qatari Riyals	84.285
Saudi Riyals	81.840
Jordanian Dinar	429.420
Egyptian Pound	18.955
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.674
Indian Rupees	4.213
Pakistani Rupees	1.957
Bangladesh Taka	3.546
Philippines Peso	5.929
Cyprus pound	18.060
Japanese Yen	3.810
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.655
Malaysian Ringgit	74.760

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	43.995
Thai Bhat	11.055
Turkish Lira	51.280
Singapore dollars	224.556

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.392713	0.406613
Czech Korune	0.005434	0.014734
Danish Krone	0.041391	0.046391
Euro	0.332260	0.345960
Georgian Lari	0.105426	0.105426
Hungarian	0.000938	0.001128
Norwegian Krone	0.030486	0.035686
Romanian Leu	0.054176	0.071026
Russian Ruble	0.004903	0.004903
Slovakia	0.009071	0.019071
Swedish Krona	0.028233	0.032333
Swiss Franc	0.306748	0.317748
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.202048	0.210448
New Zealand Dollar	0.196183	0.205683
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.228774	0.237774
US Dollars	0.299700	0.304250
US Dollars Mint	0.300300	0.304250
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.002924	0.003725

Chinese Yuan	0.042237	0.045737
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036999	0.039749
Indian Rupee	0.003575	0.004347
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002714	0.002894
Korean Won	0.000250	0.000265
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070289	0.076289
Nepalese Rupee	0.002619	0.002959
Pakistan Rupee	0.001313	0.002083
Philippine Peso	0.005839	0.006139
Singapore Dollar	0.219793	0.229793
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001315	0.001895
Taiwan	0.009987	0.010167
Thai Baht	0.009739	0.010289
Vietnamese Dong	0.00013	0.000013

Arab

Bahraini Dinar	0.799694	0.807734
Egyptian Pound	0.018899	0.021640
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000199	0.000259
Jordanian Dinar	0.423583	0.432583
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000100	0.000250
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021126	0.045126
Omani Riyal	0.783968	0.791850
Qatar Riyal	0.082791	0.083623
Saudi Riyal	0.079927	0.081227
Syrian Pound	0.001288	0.001508
Tunisian Dinar	0.104819	0.112819
Turkish Lira	0.044548	0.054393
UAE Dirhams	0.082081	0.082907
Yemeni Riyal	0.000987	0.001067